

The Auburn Circle

Fall 1991

Vol. 17, No. 1

Fact and Fiction

Witchcraft:

**A modern
spellcaster
dispels the myths**

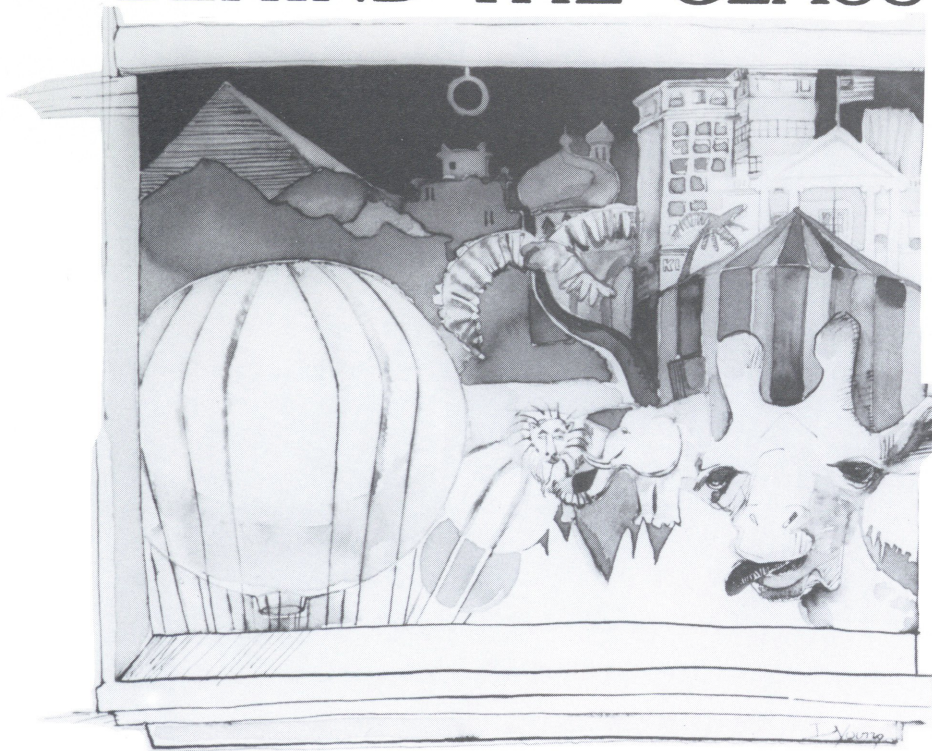
**Fiction, poetry, art
and photography
by students**

The Closet Door

**The Auburn Gay and Lesbian Association
stands its ground**

**Homosexual students express the fears and frustrations
of being themselves**

BEHIND THE GLASS



*A short stroll
to a different world.
Behind one facade ~
an unusual melange.
A place to be.
A place to see.*

cafe boutique gallery gifts toys cards

Q&M

BOOKSTORE, INC.



Q&M I 887-7007

115 SOUTH COLLEGE, AUBURN, ALABAMA

Q&M II AT TIGER CROSSING 826-8844
JUST OFF SHUG JORDAN PARKWAY

1619 S. COLLEGE STREET, AUBURN, AL 36830

THE Gift Shoppe BY **Q&M**
AU HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER

BOOKS, T-SHIRTS, SWEATS, ART SUPPLIES,
ARCHITECT SUPPLIES, COMPLETE BOOKSTORE NEEDS

Subscribe

Established in 1974, *The Auburn Circle* is the outlet for student fiction, poetry, art, photography and in-depth journalism. We feel that Auburn University students, families, and staff are entitled to enjoy such a publication long after they leave campus. Take part in every aspect of Auburn spirit. Subscribe to the *Circle*.

Three issues (one year): \$4.50

(Price is based on printing cost and postage fees)

Mail check or money order to:

The Auburn Circle

Glomerata Suite

Auburn University, AL 36849



And by the way, don't forget Christmas...

Circled



The witch of the '90s

Articles

5 The Closet Door

Members of the Auburn Gay and Lesbian Association explain how and why they petitioned the SGA for an official charter.

Plus, homosexuals express the danger and loneliness of being a gay student.

24 Mystic Gryphon

A modern day witch defends her faith against modern religion and fairy tale stereotypes.

Fiction

9 A Kinder Garden by Jake Adam York

A colorful tot find his roots in a world of grown-ups

31 College Exotica by Sandy Brundage

Fantasy gone awry eats at a student's soul

Poetry

- 13 **Snake-bitten** by Shelly Wunder
- 16 **Jesus the Imagination** by Todd Keith
- Memento for a Sky Gazelle** by Sandy Brundage
- 21 **paper perception** by Saja Hoffpauir
- The October Tide** by Jake Adam York
- 28 **Sand Visions** by R. Perrin Ehlinger
- 33 **Painting Memories** by R. Perrin Ehlinger

Art

- by Robert Bruce, **Pigs** 14
- by Robert Bruce, **Overpass** 14
- by Robert Bruce, **No Loitering** 15
- by Karin Fecteau, **Untitled** 22
- by Shawn Brasfield, **Somewhere In-between** 22
- by Edwin G. Walls, **Under Glass** 23
- by Edwin G. Walls, **Reconstructed Pane** 34

Photography

- 8 **Duet** by Owen Barnes
- 8 **Untitled** by Jeff Snyder
- 17 **Untitled** by John Heredia
- 18 **One Month Later** by Matthew McLean
- by Cliff Oliver, **Heart Lake and Latir Mesa** 20
- by Matthew McLean, **Untitled** 20
- by Tom Starling, **Boat Adrift** 20



Editor

Chris Smith

Business Manager

Amy Bass

Photography Director

Jeff Snyder

Art Director

Karen Scarborough

Fiction Editor

Kathy Graham

Poetry Editor

Jim Johnson

Assistant Business Manager

Angel Vendl

Assistant Photography Director

Holly Heath

Assistant Art Director

Will Burns

Assistant Fiction Editor

Jake Adam York

Assistant Poetry Editor

Charles Gaston

Staff

Danielle Arnt, R. Perrin Ehlinger,
T. Franklin Harris, Millicent Manning,
Dawn Motter, Melissa Nolen,
Karen Parr, Misty Speake,
Jennifer L. Taylor, Bonnie Odell.

And all 125 students
who submitted work to the *Circle*.

Cashing in on Change

The Auburn Circle was once funded entirely by Student Activity Fees. In an effort to reduce our costs and increase our distribution, we have chosen to make the move to advertising. This is a test issue in those regards. With the support of area businesses and the students who support them, the *Circle* will become a larger and more regular campus publication. Any business interested in placing an ad in the *Circle* should call 844-4122. A sales representative will work with you so that your business gets the most out of your advertisement.

Faculty Advisor

Wartan Jemian

Editorial Board

Thomas Dickson

Scott Finn

Elizabeth Gregory

Rebecca Haack

Ross Heck

Katie Smith

Submission Guidelines

If you would like to contribute work to *The Auburn Circle*, bring the submission to the *Circle* office where you will fill out a submission form. This form insures that all submissions are judged anonymously. Please do not print author's name on individual pages of work. Artists should keep in mind that all art remains in the *Circle* office and is photographed to avoid risk of damage. We accommodate art of any size or form. Photographers and artists should keep in mind that we are also looking for bodies of related work for the Gallery section. All submissions become property of *The Auburn Circle* on a one-time printing basis only.

Letters to the editor are also accepted. Letters should primarily be in response to this issue, but we accept letters on any topic.

The *Circle* office is in the basement of Foy Union down the outside steps of War Eagle Cafeteria, in the Glomerata Suite. For more information, call 844-4122, or write: *The Auburn Circle*, Glomerata Suite, Foy Union Bldg., Auburn University, AL 36849.

Colophon

This issue of *The Auburn Circle* was printed on 100-pound Potlach Mountie Matte paper by The Brown Printing Company of Montgomery, AL. All color art was photographed by the *Circle* staff.

The journalism and fiction typeface is 11-point Garamond.

Poetry is 11-point Avant-Garde.

The Auburn Circle, financed by advertising and Auburn University student activity fees, serves as a forum for the writers and artists within the university community. It aims to appeal to a diverse Auburn audience by providing a variety of feature and investigative journalism, short stories, poetry, art and photography. The *Circle* is published three times a year, in fall, winter and spring, with an average distribution of 6,000 copies. The views expressed throughout the issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the publisher (the Board of Student Communications), the *Circle* Editorial Board and staff, Auburn University, its administration, student body or Board of Trustees.

The Closet Door

**The Auburn Gay and Lesbian Association
is fighting for the official right to unlock the doors of acceptance.
Their weapon is the banner of self-affirmation.**

Article by Tonya Ponds

Editor's Note: Some names in this article have been changed to protect the confidentiality of sources.

The Auburn Gay and Lesbian Association won a small victory October 16 when the Student Board of Organizations recommended that the group receive a permanent charter.

But the group faces the final battle on Nov. 25 when the Student Government Association Senate responds to that recommendation.

"There is no reason we should be denied a charter," said Stuart, an AGLA member. "We are a legitimate organization, and, like other people with similar interests, we have the right to get together, discuss things and socialize.

"If we are denied because rules weren't followed, that's one thing," he said. "But if the charter is denied because of social stigmas, then (the SGA) would be saying, 'Yes, we are bigots; stigmas are good and honesty isn't a good thing.'"

AGLA received a probationary charter in the fall of 1990. According to the guidelines in the SGA Constitution, a group must hold a probationary charter for one year before going before the Organizations Board. This board must then decide whether to recommend to the Student Senate that a group receive a permanent charter.

If the charter is granted, AGLA will be a recognized organization on campus and, if it wishes, it can become the Auburn University Gay and Lesbian Association.

According to Brenda, AGLA co-president, the group is being

extremely careful in making sure the requirements in the constitution are followed. In fact, the group has been more careful than other groups might normally be, she said.

"I'll be surprised (if we are denied)," said Brenda. "The guidelines are clear, and I don't see a gap.

"We have made absolutely sure, in our minds, that we have made all qualifications of the charter. If we say that we did something, we can prove that we did it. That's why I'm confident about it," she said.

But another reason for Brenda's confidence lies in her belief in the system. She doesn't expect AGLA to be treated differently from any other group.

"If we are denied, and we have met the requirements, and it's obvious, we will have to take other actions to be legitimized on campus," she said. "But I don't expect to be turned down."

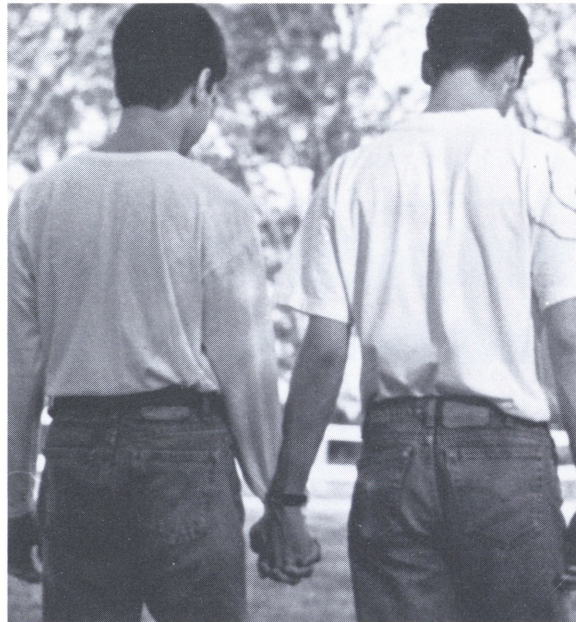
With a membership of 40 to 45 during the fall, AGLA is needed in this community, said Brenda.

"We serve as a social, informative, and educational group," she said.

"We are a service group. We have done food drives. We are an educational group. We do panels (in classes) to try to alleviate biases and dispel myths. It's a social group, so

guys have a place to come and make friends," she said.

"We are not group therapy, but we are a group of friends who help each other out. We are not a dating service. We have



"... if the charter is denied because of social stigmas, then (the SGA) would be saying, 'Yes, we are bigots'"

- Stuart

P H O T O G R A P H Y B Y H O L L Y H E A T H

speakers on AIDS, HIV testing and other issues. There are also people who are not gay who are members, and people who are not students," she said.

The initial presence of the organization sparked Senate debates and numerous editorials in *The Auburn Plainsman*. Therefore, SGA officers do expect some opposition.

"I think that we can expect opposition from some groups on campus, and at the same time, support from other groups," said Jon Waggoner, SGA president.

"But regardless of the outcries we hear from the campus, the evidence will be the deciding factor as to whether or not they receive their charter.

"If the charter is granted, then the students will be aware that Auburn University Student Government feels that the club would function for the betterment of Auburn University and vice versa.

"If the charter is not granted, it will be

"... regardless of the outcries we hear from the campus, the evidence will be the deciding factor as to whether or not they receive their charter."

- Jon Waggoner

because the SGA does not believe that the charter is for the betterment of Auburn University," he said.

SGA Vice President Scott Sprayberry, like Waggoner, believes that the Senate should and will make a decision based on the qualifications stated in the constitution.

"I can't speak for the Senate, but the

Senate knows that it has to base its decisions on the SGA Constitution Code of Laws.

"I believe that is why they were elected, to decide things like these. The students trust them to make decisions," he said.

Decisions concerning such issues are often clearer in the light of personal experience.

Janet Nolan's (03 GY) first experiences impressed on her the importance of acceptance.

"Having a friend who is HIV-positive opened my eyes about the issue," she said. "I come from an anti-gay family, and, according to my mother, they are all going to hell because they only lust after the body.

"But by meeting gay people," she said, "I saw this was ignorant and bigoted. AGLA can help people to be honest with themselves and the heterosexual community."

Frustration and fear: Living with homosexuality in Auburn

by Tonya Ponds

Editor's Note: Some names in this article have been changed to protect the confidentiality of sources.

Imagine being afraid to put your arms around your boyfriend or girlfriend in public. Imagine not being able to hold hands or kiss. Maybe you can. But those who can't imagine these things begin to realize something about homosexuality, and, according to some homosexuals, being gay at Auburn University.

John, a graduate student in liberal arts, quickly looked around when he thought he'd said "being gay" too loud. Jimmy, an English major, worried about the name of his hangout being printed because of people being bashed. And Bob, even in confidence, didn't give his full name for fear of being forced out of the closet.

Many Auburn students said they've had to watch their behavior so they won't get tagged as gay or lesbian. Some of their reasons were different. Some because of families, some because of friends, but mostly because of social stigmas.

"It's the same as being anywhere; you feel confined and constricted," said Susan. "You see other people with their dates, and you don't have freedom like that.

"You have to constantly watch your behavior, and what's

natural for you may not be natural for someone else," she said.

Like many other students, Susan hasn't told her family that she's homosexual, and, according to her, she won't for some time.

Because of her family's religious beliefs, she knows they won't be accepting, and when she does tell her parents, she has to be ready for the worst.

"I'll be kicked out of the family," she said.

"They've made remarks in the past about not allowing my nieces and nephews around 'one.'

"So when I'm ready to be cut off financially, emotionally, and mentally, I'll tell them."

However, Susan does think it's easier for lesbians on campus because women are given more freedom to show physical contact.

"Two girls can hug each other or kiss each other on the cheek, where men cannot," she said. "Also, a lot of guys see lesbians as sexy."

But still she feels it's difficult being homosexual on Auburn's

campus and is glad AGLA exists.

"I've been with AGLA from the beginning, and I can't say how beneficial it has been for me or how educational it's been for people on Auburn's campus," she said.

Jimmy, also a student, said he's practically out of the closet to those who see him on a regular basis, meaning family, friends, and co-workers. But he's still leery on this campus.

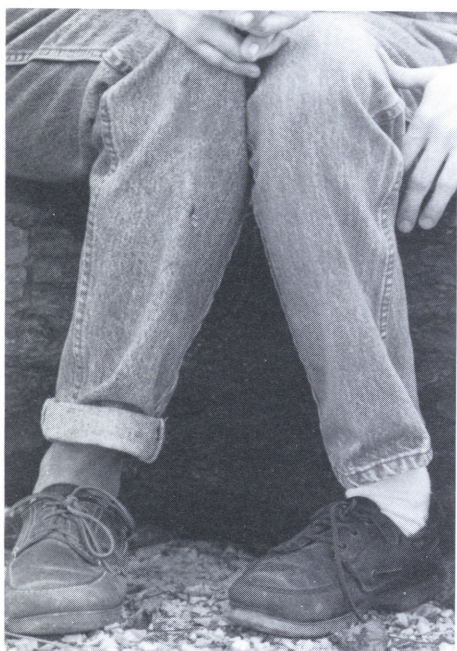
"This is such a conservative school, so you feel uncomfortable. If someone looks out of place, they get a lot of attention.

"So you just don't show any kind of behavior that would make a bunch of antagonist people think you're gay," he said.

Auburn is an engineering school with

"I see straight couples sitting with their arms around each other, and I know I can't do that without a risk to my health."

- Jimmy



little emphasis on the arts, and gays tend to excel in those fields, he said. However, that's not to say that there are not gay engineers or business majors.

"Auburn's just a cold, calculating school that doesn't want to get away from that, and other schools that have a greater concentration on the arts don't seem to be so closed-minded," he said.

"So gays feel more comfortable there than at the hard-core engineering atmosphere at Auburn."

Even though Jimmy feels he must repress himself and his actions, he makes it clear that it's not because he's ashamed of his sexuality, but because he could get seriously hurt. This is one of the main reasons he and others stay in the closet.

"I see straight couples sitting with their arms around each other, and I know I can't do that without a risk to my health.

"But I'm not depressed about being gay. I'm personally happy about being gay, and I wouldn't have it any other way," he said.

John agrees that it's extremely difficult being gay at Auburn, but one of the most difficult aspects is meeting people.

"It's hard to let people know your full life without putting out this persona," he said.

"You may have a few friends, but when they graduate, and you haven't met other friends, it's lonely.

"Sometimes it's nice to have people around and not have to worry about what you say, how you act, or what you're thinking," he said.

When asked why he chose Auburn, a university with a conservative reputation, John responded without hesitation.

"It's a good place to go to school. I've got my masters, and now I'm working on my Ph.D. I've lived in Auburn longer than any place since high school," he said.

"But to be gay on campus, prior to AGLA, you had to clique with friends undercover. If you're that unfortunate soul who couldn't get into a clique, you were lonely.

"When my friends graduated, I felt pretty depressed and lonely. I wanted a



"Sometimes it's nice to have people around and not have to worry about what you say, how you act, or what you're thinking."

- John

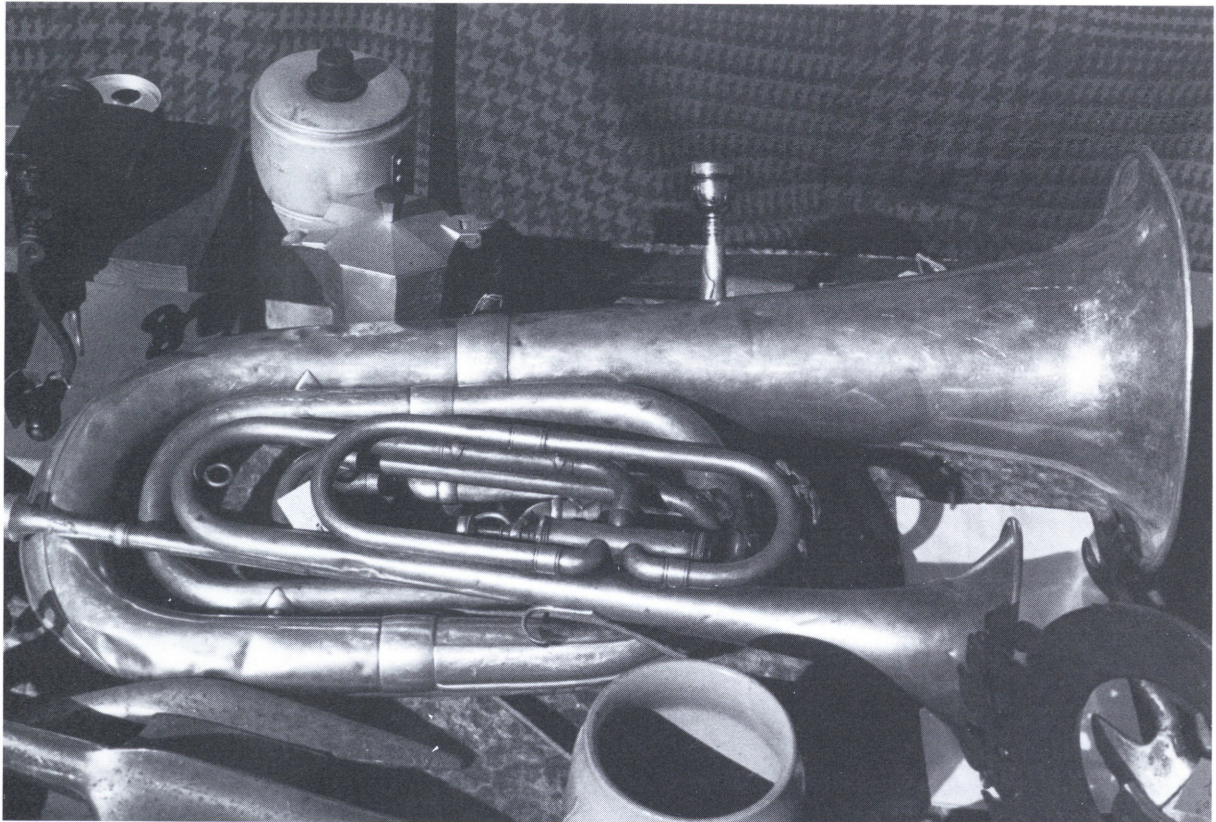
circle of friends as a safety net, like everyone has friends as a safety net to share your life with.

"It was about that time when I heard of AGLA. I went to the first meeting, and I've gone ever since," he said.

Jimmy said, "With things like the KA Old South Parade and reading editorials in the *Plainsman* about AGLA, I feel uncomfortable."

"Reading those stupid religious arguments based on things in a book, such as the Bible, or on things they can't back up, makes you uncomfortable because you can't talk logically with someone who doesn't recognize logic.

"Those people don't think that there should be anyone different from them," he said. "That's not logic, and dealing with illogical people makes me uncomfortable."



"Duet"
Owen Barnes



Untitled
Jeff Snyder

A Kinder Garden

Fiction by Jake Adam York

The tall pines leaned their heads together under the pale blue afternoon, casting shadows down into the backyard in myriads of designs. Steven recognized butterflies and giraffes and human faces in the dappled grass as he walked toward the garden where his mother was on her knees, planting "May flowers." In his hand, Steven carried his own May flowers. Her flowers were seeds, and his flowers were flat.

"Hey, Stevie," she said, turning to find him standing next to her. Smiling, she asked, "How was kindergarten today?"

"It was lots of fun," Steven replied, returning the smile which widened as he gazed into his mother's eyes. "We got to color today again."

That was Steven's favorite thing – coloring. He hated saying his alphabet. He had known it for almost two years, so it wasn't amusing except when the teacher would let him say it

backwards. However, Steven had only been allowed to do that once, and his performance had met with much disapproval. Coloring, though, was a different story. Steven was given a new picture every day, so coloring never got old, especially with the variety of colors he could choose from his Crayola 64-pack with the built-in sharpener.

Steven's mother knew how much he enjoyed coloring; he spent many afternoons in his room with his coloring books.

"Is that a picture you have there?" she asked, pointing to the paper tube in his hand.

Steven nodded.

"May I see it?"

"Yeah," Steven said, unrolling the page and handing it to his mother. She took the picture in her hands and gazed upon a kaleidoscopic mess. She could discern no forms, only colors.

"It's a garden," Steven told his mother. "Do you like it? Do you like my May flowers?" he asked.

His mother squinted, scrutinizing the picture. Finally her eyes focused, finding the familiar shapes of the tulips and marigolds and sunflowers which Steven had rendered obscure. She held in her hands a radioactive garden.

"Do you like it?" Steven asked again.

She said nothing. She merely stared, trying to identify the mutant vegetation by shape. *The colors are all wrong*, she thought.

"Baby," she said, "these flowers are all the wrong colors. Why did you color them like this?"

Steven shrugged, offering no explanation.

"Why, Steven? Why?"

Again, he shrugged his shoulders.

Steven's mother turned to her side, grabbing a pile of used seed packets. She showed Steven the picture of the marigolds on the envelope, comparing it to the purple blob on Steven's picture which resembled a marigold in form only. "This," she said, pointing to the picture on the pack, "is what it is supposed to

Finally her eyes focused, finding the familiar shapes of the tulips and marigolds and sunflowers which Steven had rendered obscure. She held in her hands a radioactive garden.

"Do you like it?" Steven asked again.

look like."

She continued with lilies, lilacs, and daisies. "Sunflowers should be yellow, not the magenta color. And tulips are never silver," she corrected. The garden began to wither in Steven's mind, but the trees leaned closer together, shifting the shadow into a blanket which would close in around Steven and protect him.



The cool air of late March gnawed on Steven's cheeks with the last three teeth of Winter as he made his way through the shadow-maze of the backyard. His mother was in her garden again, laying seeds to rest in their shallow beds and then tucking them in with dark blankets of topsoil. Steven threaded his way to the flowerbed and stood silently beside his mother with a roll of papers in his hand.

Steven's mother turned and kissed him on his splotched cheek, still on her knees. "Hey, Steven. Did you have fun today?" she inquired.

"Yeah," Steven replied, half smiling. "We said our ABC's and then we colored again. I didn't like the ABC's, but I had

fun coloring. Teacher also made me say the 'Pledge of Allegiance.'"

Steven unrolled his papers and held them in both hands. He looked to his mother's green eyes and smiled, hoping to find some glimmer of approval as he handed her his stack.

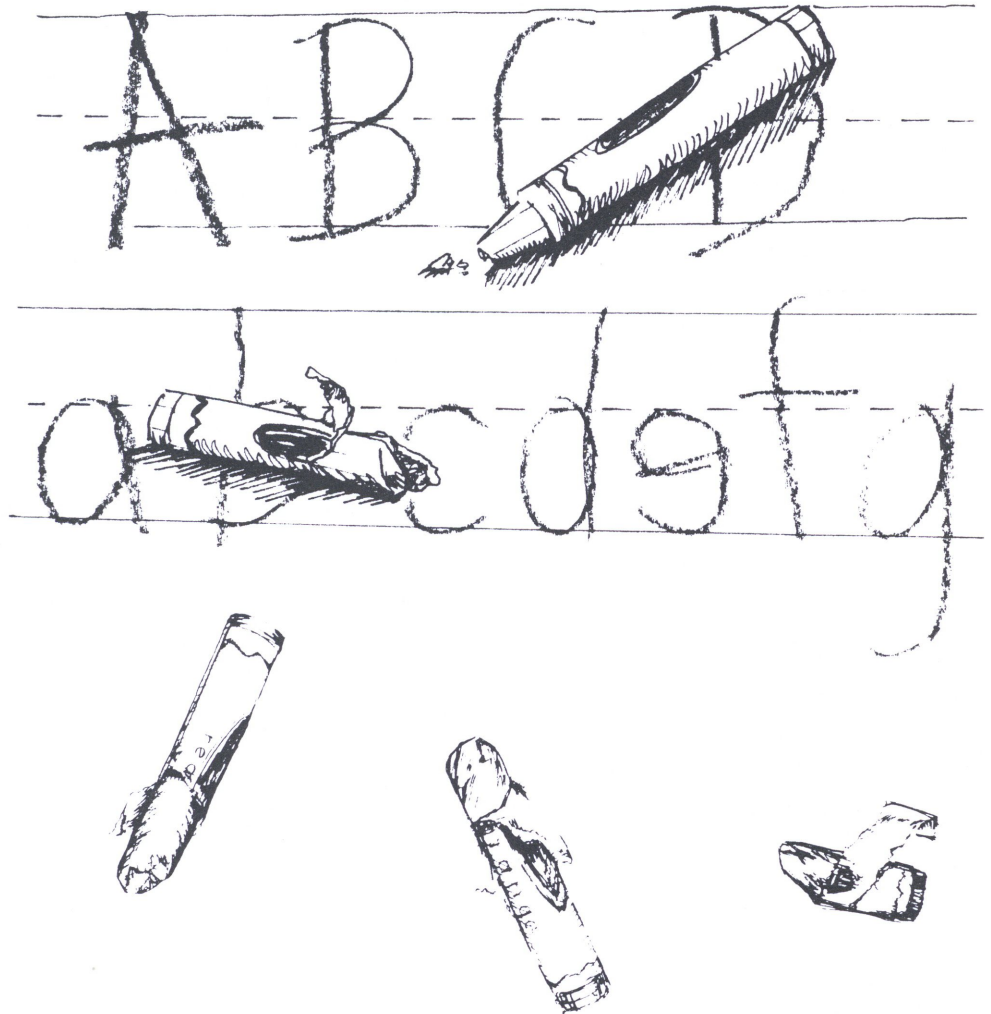
She sifted through the pages of alphabets and handwriting exercises until she uncovered another coloring. Steven watched her face carefully, searching for a smile. He found only a scowl as his mother's eye ran wildly across the page, trying to discern shapes amid the chaos of colors.

The picture she was scanning was another garden scene; however, this one was much more lush and displayed a greater variety of colors than the last piece Steven brought home. More "normal" colors, such as green and brown, appeared in the foliage, but the psychedelic blues, oranges, and purples which had dominated the previous coloring were still present.

The flowers were all wrong. The lesson in colors was a failure: Steven had remembered nothing. The lilacs had deep crimson petals with violet edges, the sunflowers were still magenta, and the chrysanthemums were red with white polka-dots. The ferns were a sorrowful blue. The only normal flora in the picture were the trees which had brown trunks and green leaves.

Once again, Steven's mother took her seed packets and attempted to show Steven what the flowers were supposed to look like. Unfortunately, she had no pictures of tulips, which Steven had colored a translucent silver, or roses, which he had colored black. Steven merely stared at his picture as his mother continued her diatribe, and her words faded away as the swaying of the trees caressed him into a lassitude far from reality.

Frustrated by Steven's inattention, she rose to her feet and walked up to the house through the tide of shadows which ebbed and flowed across the grass. The trees leaned toward her with



admonishing frowns as Steven was lulled by the song of the pines.

Once she was gone, Steven awoke from his catatonia and gazed on his paper garden. Hers was like the garden near the playground which invited him only to look and to smell, never to touch. His garden invited him to play and to touch as well as to look and to smell. He could run through the forests behind his garden, and the trees would protect him. The flowers in his garden would never cut him like the rose bushes near the playground; the roses in his garden were tender and black and thornless.

Steven took up the spade his mother had left and began to dig a large hole in the center of the flowerbed. Once the hole was big enough, Steven laid

his picture in the bed he had made for it and sprinkled it with all the seeds he could find.

Before he spread the topsoil blanket over the seeds, he prayed for his garden. "Now I lay thee down to sleep. I pray the trees their watch to keep. If these seeds should die before they wake, I pray the Lord my mom's to take."

Steven filled in the hole with the dirt that was dark like night. Maybe his seeds would have dreams. He knew he would walk in dream where he first discovered the garden and smelled the young perfume.

Steven looked to the sky and prayed for rain. April was only a few days away, and everyone (including Steven) knew that April showers bring May flowers.



The night was like topsoil on Steven's chest, and his mind was like a seed, waiting to sprout. And then it did. His mind stretched upward, phototropically, into the realm of dreams.

There he found his garden, and the flowers sang to him. The trees closed in around him with their quilted shadows and held him green and youthful in their boughs. The creatures of the forest slouched between the trees, humming his name in euphonic praise.

It was far from the garden near the playground which he was thrown into by the girl down the block. She was two years older than he was, and she pushed him into the rose bushes for taking *her* swing. In that garden, there were lilacs and marigolds and lilies like the ones his mother had planted. The flowers mocked Steven in the girl's voice, and they cut him when he touched.

That night he dreamed of a jungle which burned in the darkness as his garden did. He dreamed of himself below infinite skies, green-faced with hair like the fire of the sun.

There he was safe.

There he was king.



And his mother dreamed also. Steven's garden flamed in her mind. The images of the mutated vegetation couldn't be washed away. The trees leaned over her, frowning. She curled fetally, terrified. Her son's voice echoed through the forest.

"I am king!" came the voice.

The words were slurred; they ran together into a semi-articulate mass as had most of Steven's speech for several weeks. Steven was a very quiet boy who played alone at the playground.

He talked into the air when he colored at home. The pictures and the voice and the playground and Steven – what was this?

She feared for her son. Why could he not speak clearly? Was he normal? Was he healthy? Why did he color the garden that way? Was he OK? Did he have brain damage?

The trees leaned, and she curled fetally, terrified, and the warm mass beside her slept, oblivious . . .



. . . to her fears. He had seen the pictures too, but he was not bothered by them at all. He liked looking at the pictures and thinking that his son must have some great imagination.

He always wanted to be an artist, but he didn't have the hands for it. There were always images in his mind but he couldn't move them from the abstract to the concrete – or clay or canvas. Now, his son might be an artist! He could work with his son, and, perhaps, they could capture his mental images.

He hadn't noticed the slurring of words or Steven's habit of talking into the air while he was coloring. She had said nothing. She had not said one thing about her discomfort with the pictures Steven was bringing home. So he slept, warm and ignorant.

Canvas dreams enveloped him, and he slept amidst primaries in the undarkness. In the dream he watched his son paint. The images of his childhood flowed onto the canvas.



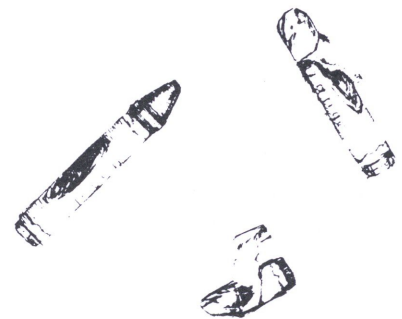
Afternoons decayed in the garden. Steven's mother weeded and planted while he watched and played in the shadowed grass. Steven would show

his mother the papers he brought home, and then he would listen to the whispering of the trees as his mother tried to speak to him.

She began to worry about Steven more and more. The frequency of his slurring increased, and he grew very distant when she spoke to him. Sometimes his eyes glazed over, and she could say nothing to break the spell. Steven was more quiet than usual, speaking only in reply and addressing no one other than the walls of his room.

As Steven's pictures became more bizarre, her concern increased. One of the more fantastic pieces was a picture of a jungle in which technicolor trees mushroomed nuclear orange into a burning sky. Mythical beasts melted in and out of the abstract vegetation. They seemed to scream; the colors hurt her.

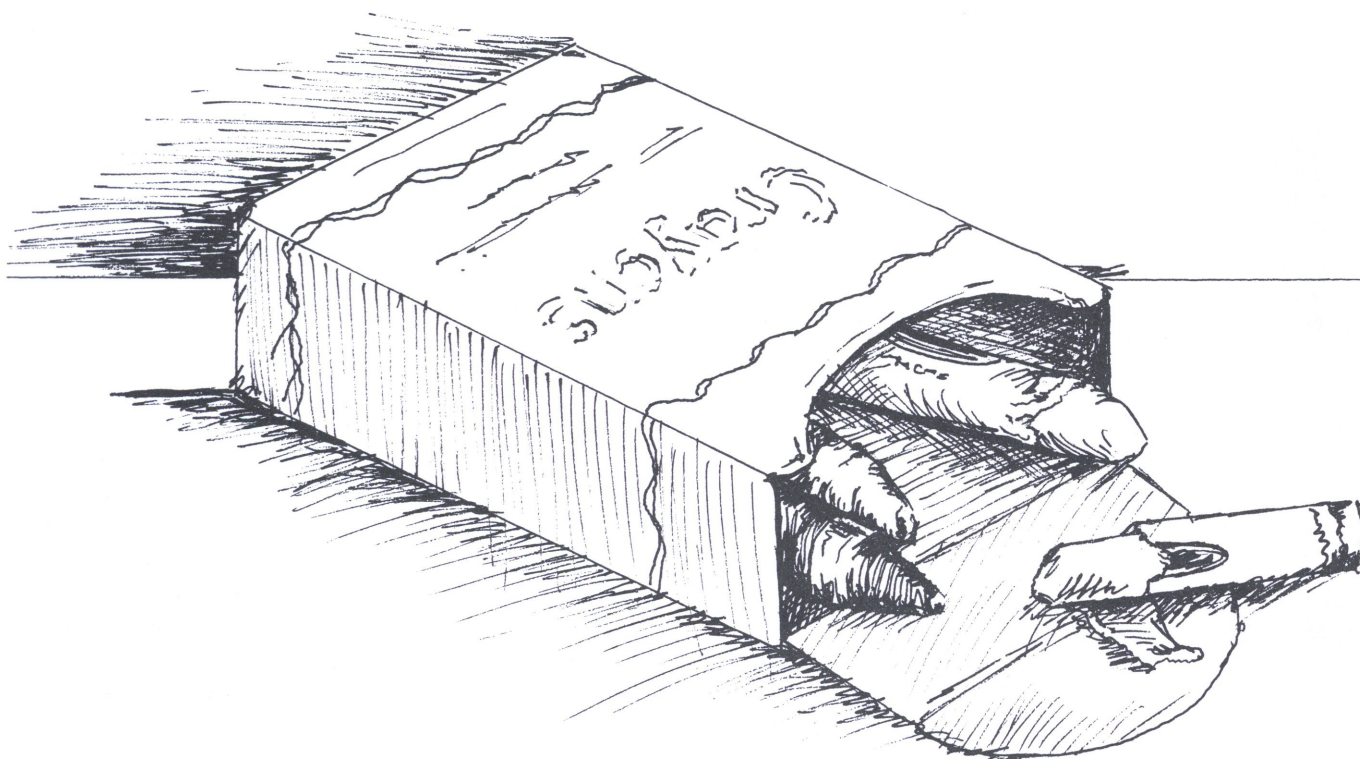
Steven lay in the middle of the shadow-laden lawn, watching rhinoceroses and elephants and chimeras and sphinxes pass overhead. He smiled widely to the sky and waited for it to smile back.



At night, his mother raced below the radioactive trees, lost in the twisted maze of the jungle. The ferns twisted their writhing tendrils, trying to grasp her legs as fluorescent beasts lunged for her throat, exploding from the surreal underbrush.

The voice came, slurred: *I em kin! Iemkin!* It was Steven, and he was king. He was Lear who had been spared his eyes only to have his tongue removed.

Iemkin! he roared again.



Steven's self-portrait would twist new thorns of nightmare into her mind. She had grown accustomed to the gardens and jungles and animals that Steven brought home, but his self-portrait was different. *Could he view himself in the same way?* She wondered when she anxiously dropped him at kindergarten with a mirror and one of his father's old shirts.

It came back, stained with Steven's imagination, and she winced. His face was green like the ryegrass of the Spring lawn. His hair flamed yellow like the hydrogen fire of the sun, and his eyes were ripe, red apples haloed with an azure ring. His lips were purple, and his tongue was blue. The Steven on the page wore a technicolor dreamcoat composed of every color he could mix.

She dreamt of her son in his own image for many nights, and she tossed and turned. When her bedmate asked if she was OK, she said "yes," and he rolled back into his oblivious sleep.

He had also seen the picture, but he had loved it. He had planned to have it framed for his study if Steven didn't want it in his own room. She told him nothing, so he knew nothing of her

fears. He had noticed that Steven was slurring his speech, but he thought it was merely mumbling not to be worried with. She sometimes thought that it was perhaps just a stage Steven was going through. With Summer, kindergarten would stop, and he would be coloring less. Perhaps it would end there. Steven would also be at home with her, so she could watch him closely and guide him.

Perhaps with Summer it would end; perhaps all the strange colorings and the nightmares and the anguish . . . Perhaps with Summer.



With the last week of April, the modern art books moved from the coffee table of the study to the top shelf.

Steven spent many hours in the study with his father — hours during which Steven's mother had no contact with the pair. She often wondered what they did in there; what could they do together for hours without making a

sound? Steven's mother ventured into the study periodically to see what she could find; however, her rummaging seldom met with success. But she never thought to look between the covers of the books which lined the room.

Books seemed harmless enough. Steven could read very little, and what he could read he had to read out loud. She had never heard Steven's father reading out loud to Steven. They couldn't be reading books together. But art could be looked at without a sound, and it was something Steven could appreciate. She never thought about the art books which were scattered everywhere.

She rushed to the study. On the table there lay several modern art books which she rifled through. Her eyes widened as she flipped through pages of Bacon, Dali, Pollock, Rousseau, Miro, Picasso and Derain. She saw Steven's ferns, his tigers, and *his face* in the paintings.

Perhaps Steven had seen these pictures, she thought. *Perhaps he has imitated these pictures. He'll be OK! I'll just hide these books so neither he nor his father can find them.*

Steven was probably normal after all. And the slurring? Fluid in the ears. Simple. It was a common childhood problem. She would take Steven to the doctor next week and have his ears checked.

The contagion had been removed. Summer was a little more than a month away. Kindergarten would recess for the Summer. Steven would be home. The modern art books would remain on the top shelf. Everything would be all right. Steven would be fine.

The trees leaned together to share their secrets as she walked across the shadow-latticed grass toward her garden. While she was weeding, the trees frowned at her and laughed among themselves. They knew.

She noticed a spot in the center of the garden where nothing was sprouting. It was strange that she hadn't noticed it before, but she hadn't been in the

garden for several days, because it had rained. Everywhere, flowers were beginning to sprout except for a small circular region in the center of the garden.

She decided to wait for a few days and then reseed or plant some seedlings. As she walked back to the house, the trees leaned together and laughed.



Steven brought home more pictures, but the colors were fading. The scenes were more conventional than the pictures of the garden and the jungle. Steven was getting better. She could stop worrying about him. Besides, summer was only three weeks away.

She smiled at the thought of being home with Steven all day. The doctor had said that Steven's ears were filled

with fluid, but it was no big deal. Minor surgery would take care of that. Steven would be fine.

She sauntered down through the shadowed grass toward her garden where a surprise awaited her. It was the present of the trees. They laughed as she gazed in astonishment on the surreal bouquet which had bloomed where nothing had been several days before. There she saw lilacs with deep crimson petals, magenta sunflowers, red chrysanthemums with white polka-dots, blue ferns, purple marigolds, translucent silver tulips, nuclear orange daisies, and thornless black roses.

This was Steven's garden, and it asked her to play. The trees grinned their wooden grins as she stood gasping before the abstract foliage. She dropped her spade and prayed for Summer beneath the mocking trees and the smiling sky.



Snake-bitten

Hollow pleasures
keep me laughing —
and leave me empty.
Although more bitter with every taste,
I come back for more,
as Eve must have done
with the apple
even though she knew what she had
lost.
Innocence is ignorance —
and ignorance is bliss.
But once innocence is gone,
the pleasures the world has to offer
call me back and rule me with
an iron hand.

— Shelly Wunder



"Pigs"
Robert Bruce
Acrylic and wood on canvas, 24" x 18"



"Overpass"
Robert Bruce
Oil, 36" x 24"



"No Loitering"
Robert Bruce
Oil, 36" x 48"

Jesus the Imagination

traveling through Goodwater, Alabama

When your grandfather, a newly re-converted
member of Lakewood Baptist, tells you to go to church —
"You bein' a college student, you can understand the Bible first-time
an for me, you know, I have to read a piece
some three, four times to get what you get out'a one."
you don't answer —

you think of how at ten you lay awake
in silence, unable to sleep
thinking of ghosts and spirits,
the light all but squeezed out of this small place
sealed in baseball-relief wallpaper,
the covers tightened around your neck,
hands clenched in the silent entreaty
"If I should die..."
how later confusion taught you to name your Savior,
just in case,
to embrace that fear,
not to hate it for what it isn't —

But at twenty-two,
the words of a man almost home
and the thoughts of a boy just leaving
become a darkened space of trepidation,
where the light is not so much admitted
as imagined.

— Todd Keith, 19 May

Memento for a Sky Gazelle

Ariel's shrill cry echoes as
Dusted-gold wings pump fiercely,
Dagger talons cut through my leather glove.

Sleek muscled body hops up my shoulder,
Black opal eyes peer into amber ones,
Translucent beak emits chirps of joy
At being and flying in twilight skies.

Pale finger ruffles velvet feathers,
Gets snagged by a sharp beak-hook;

I wince and cease dreaming of
High, cool nightwinds
Pushing against my face.

— Sandy Brundage

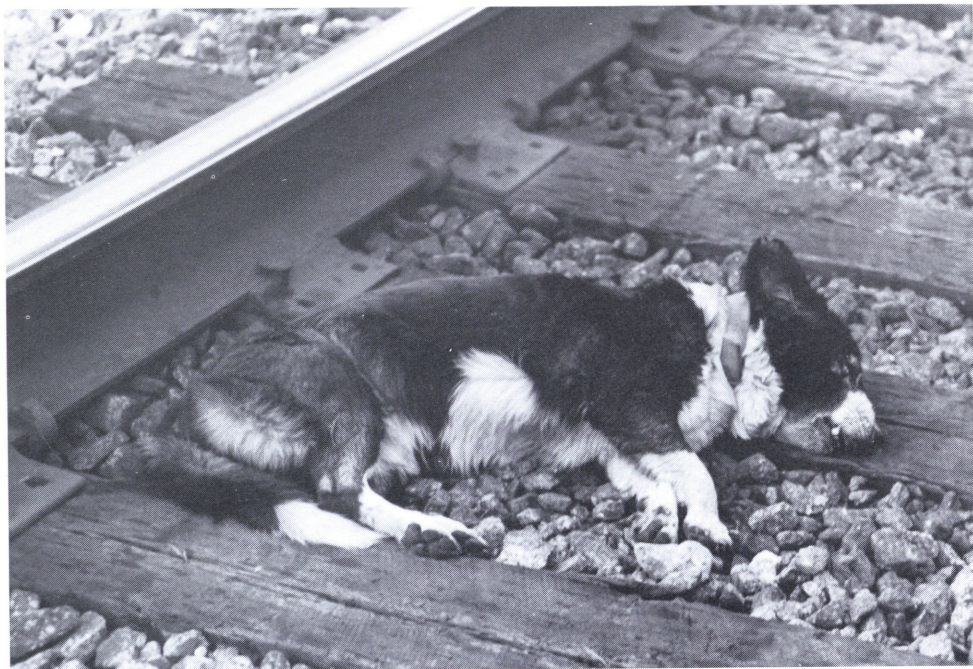


Untitled
John Heredia

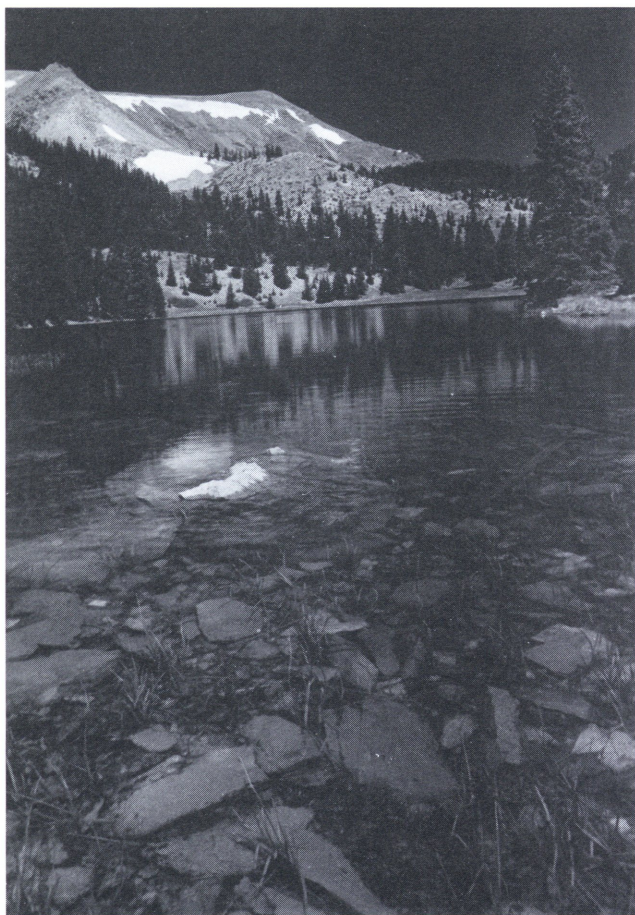


"One Month Later"

Gallery



Matt McLean



"Heart Lake and Latir Mesa"
Cliff Oliver



Untitled
Matthew McLean



"Boat Adrift"
Tom Starling

paper perception

origami heart
folded, twisted
shapes felt and not seen
The mind is the maker and
thoughts are nimble fingers.
Deft and silent, they bend and crease . . .
yet
only flightless cranes are formed here,
restlessness ruins all
thought-fingers clench
a crumpled mass remains

– Saja Hoffpauir

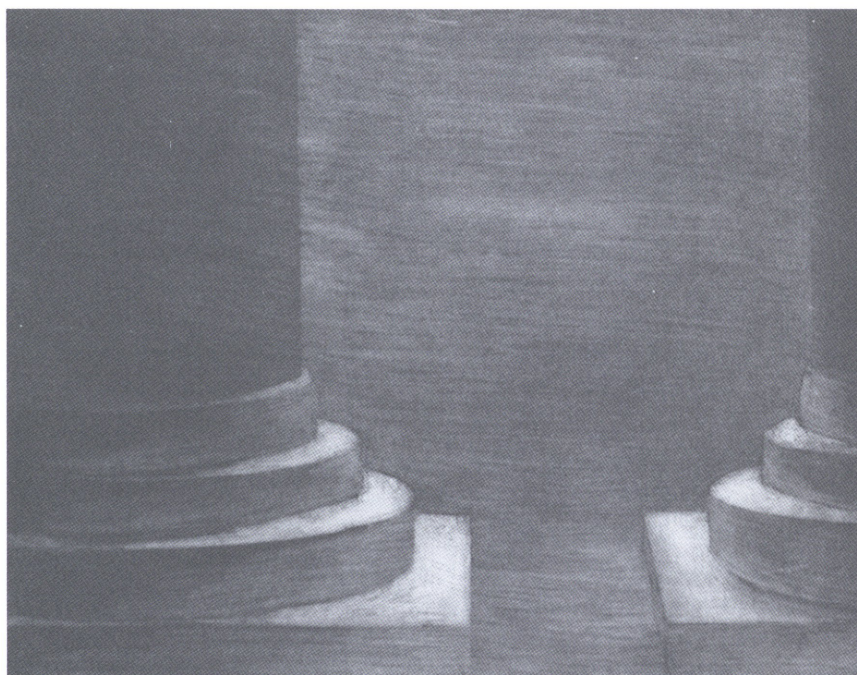
The October Tide

The dark clouds massed black
in their death
on the stormtorn edge of the sky's burning ocean
as the purple night ran royal
down the face of the west
and the lumberjack madrigal of the crickets
burned my ears.
The musical sawdust of insect love
fell blonde into my eyes,
and I lay beneath the half-moon screaming,
burning
with the blue fires cold of coming winter.
I fell
my Septembers
red
and yellow
into Autumn
where I lay in the bloody biers of Fall
and rolled with the dead in tornadoes of leaves.
I, in my autumn,
lie in the leafmeal and dream
of lost summer in the moonlight
and, long past twilight, kneel
by the August grave
below weeping stars and leaning trees
leafless in the October tide.
December creeps, prickly frost cutting skin,
into the soul, under the toenails:
creeping slowly like frozen spiders and singing
with heavenly voice which chills me
Christmas.

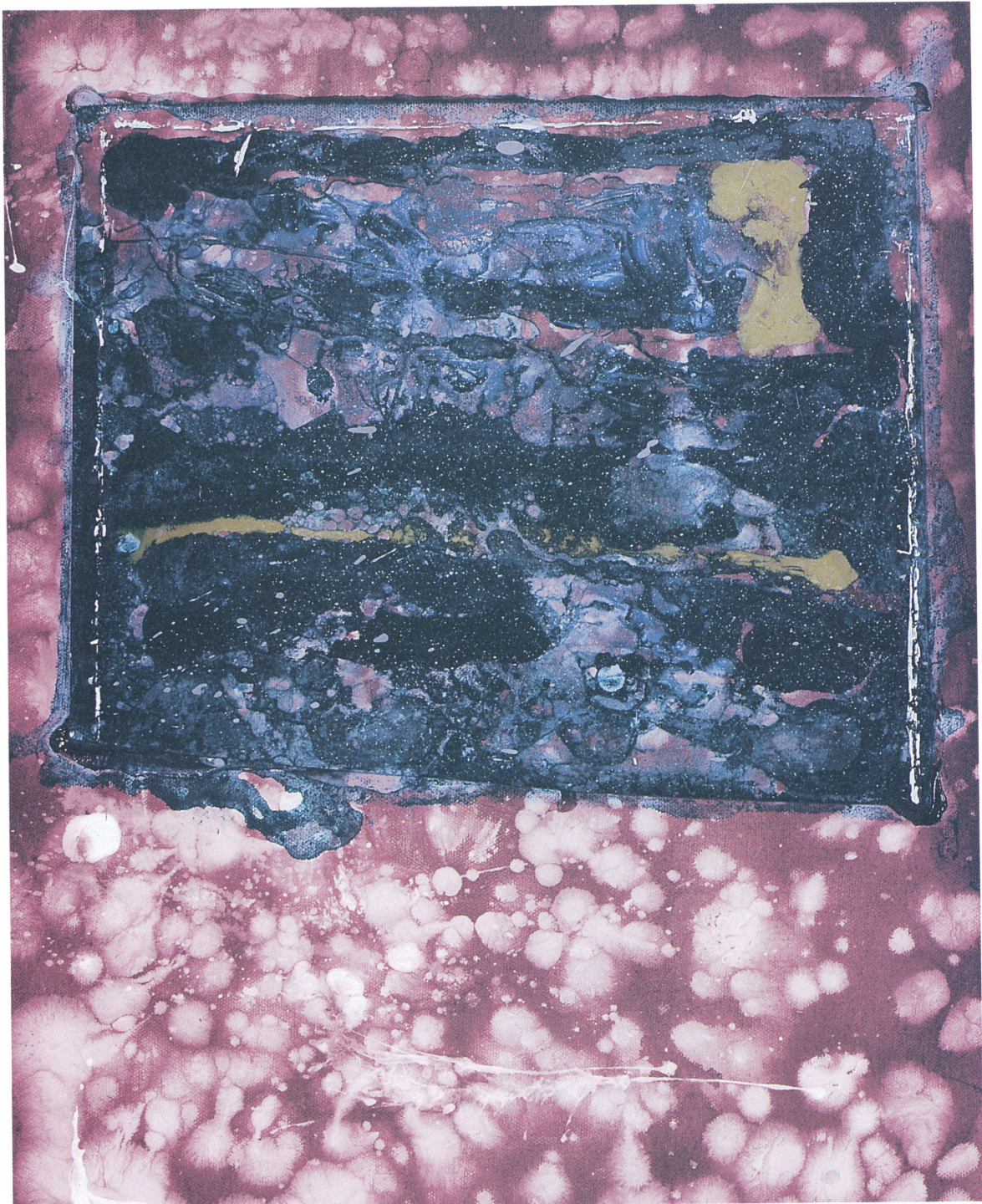
– Jake Adam York



Untitled
Karin Fecteau
Watercolor, 8 3/8" x 11"



"Somewhere In-between"
Shawn Brasfield
Intaglio print, 5 3/4" x 4 5/8"



"Under Glass"
Edwin G. Walls
Acrylic and glass on canvas, 14" x 20"

Mystic Gryphon

Old-world Witchcraft in the 20th Century

Article by Rebecca Haack

*And now about the caldron sing
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.*

*Hecate
Macbeth, IV, ii*

What, exactly, is witchcraft? Many people believe that witches are evil incarnate, the spawn of Satan. The media embellishes this idea with stories of Satanic churches, animal and human sacrifice, orgies, and drug abuse.

Witchcraft is none of these. The Mystic Gryphon, Michelle Griffin, is a modern-day spell-casting witch, and the owner of



the Mystic Gryphon metaphysical shop located at 2208 Spruce Street in Montgomery. Griffin strives to be the most complete metaphysical supplier in the southeast, and her shop illustrates this goal to become the "K-Mart of witchcraft."

Upon entering the shop, one is greeted by the mingled scents of the many herbs, oils, and incenses she stocks. Robes (which may also be custom-ordered for \$35 to \$40) hang on the walls. Buddha sits between the bookcase full of Man, Myth, and Magic, and her collection of candles, jewelry, figurines, and tie-dyed articles. Potpourri, which she mixes herself, is also available, as are books on witchcraft. Tarot cards, incense burners, and witch's ladders round out her inventory.

Griffin insists that none of her supplies may be used for evil purposes. Everything has been charged with her positive energy, and "if the user attempts to use an object with evil intentions, nothing will happen."

Sitting in the shop of the Mystic Gryphon, with Zero, one of Griffin's cats, on my lap and King, her Persian familiar, standing guard, I received a first-hand account of the religion of witchcraft, and what it means to be a witch. My lesson began with the history of witchcraft, and how it has evolved.

"It is quite probable that witchcraft is the base of all religions, as its roots lie in Paleolithic man's need for sympathetic magic," said Griffin.

The practice of sympathetic magic involved certain tribesmen dressing in the skins of animals, taking on the roles of the hunted animals and being "killed" ritually by the hunters. In this way the food supply was assured through a successful hunt. Reverence was given by early man to all natural phenomena – storms, natural disasters, and even the simple things such as the sun rising. Early man lived in harmony with nature, not outside of it.

Soon tribes began to elevate the wise ones – those who communed with the gods better than the rest of the tribe. These wise ones became the tribal priests or shamans, and their duty was to act as liaisons between the people and the gods.

The wise ones soon became known as the Wicca and were honored greatly by the people. With the coming of tribal leaders, and later kings, the Wiccan Council served as advisors and spiritual leaders for them, and as they answered only to the gods, were not under the king's jurisdiction. Therefore Wiccans (or



witches, as they were later called) served as co-rulers of the tribe or kingdom, much as Merlin did for King Arthur in England. Witchcraft, and therefore witches, were revered for their knowledge and power.

Although the establishment of other religions caused witchcraft to eventually go underground, it has survived to the present day. Griffin elaborated that the religion of witchcraft has denominations, much like Christianity.

"I believe in balance. Many witches today are too feminist, revering the goddess to the exclusion of the god. However, there are also too many covens that are political—too cliquish, commercial. These people are interested in either making money or in power," said Griffin.

"Witches also do not worship the moon, nor the sun." These planetary bodies represent the goddess and the god, respectively, whom the witches hold in reverence. Throughout history, these two entities have gone by thousands of names, many of which are studied in Greek and Roman mythology.

The common perception of witches is

"I teach a system of ethics, morality, and belief in your own feelings. Living in harmony with each other and with the planet and being active environmentalists is another aspect of witchcraft that is common to all denominations."

— Michelle Griffin

that they are ugly old hags that make pacts with the devil. As witchcraft does not recognize the entity of the devil, it is impossible to make a pact with him.

"People need to get their terms straight concerning witchcraft and Satanism," said Griffin. "Satanism is real; however, it takes a Christian to be a Satanist."

Satan worshippers are rebels, generally societal outcasts who feel rejected by the

mainstream. This rejection extends to their spiritual needs, as they often feel that God has turned on them. Therefore, they turn to God's nemesis, Satan. Satanism uses articles of the Christian church in ritual activities, but witchcraft does not.

"Witchcraft is a religion that uses magic. Props are optional, and lots of people don't use them," she said. Props, from a witch's point of view, may include caldrons, brooms, candles, and wine (to name a few). "The use of props is to focus the individual's attention on the work at hand," said Griffin. "Without focus, the spell is useless."

Although Griffin will supply the necessary ingredients for a spell, including instructions on how to perform it, she will not do a spell for anyone. "I believe in doing things for yourself," was her comment. "Herbs and spells are the equivalent of active prayers."

Griffin also believes in educating the public in regard to her religious beliefs, and her door is open to everyone, including Jehovah's Witnesses. "They visit me often," she said. "I think Christ was a

pretty hip guy." The public's reaction to Griffin's shop has been positive, she said, having encountered "no resistance, and only two letters in two years."

Training is important to those wishing to become a witch, and currently the Mystic Gryphon has two students of witchcraft under her care.

"I teach a system of ethics, morality, and belief in your own feelings. Living in harmony with each other and with the planet and being active environmentalists is another aspect of witchcraft that is common to all denominations."

Her boyfriend, Shane, has been training for two years to be a high priest. "He has a lot of intuitive knowledge about witchcraft. I think he touched down during the time when Christianity was overtaking paganism. He's qualified to be a high priest, but since he's 21 [years old] he still considers himself to be too young."

Griffin is "really proud" of one of her former students, who had Wicca placed on her dogtags. The military currently recognizes Wicca as a formal religion, placing it in the chaplain's handbook of

"The best advice I can give to someone seeking information on witchcraft is to read everything, read it again, form an opinion, and if you still don't understand, then come and ask me."

— Michelle Griffin

rituals.

Griffin is considering obtaining church status, which is open to any religion-based business whose profit does not exceed expenditures in operating costs.

"Witchcraft is a way of life," she said. The modern witch must therefore adhere to the law, or Rede: "An' [if] it harm none, do what thou wilt."

"I am a strong believer in karma," she said. Karma, for witches, is based on the three-fold reward. Whatever is done comes back three times. "That tends to be a good deterrent against evil deeds," she said.

There is also a code of ethics among witches, the Principles of Belief. These Principles guide witches in their beliefs, and allows them to better follow the

Wiccan Way—the Way of the Wise.

Included are beliefs surrounding paranormal events, respect for persons who share their wisdom, the affirmation of life, and the idea that nature is the ultimate healer and teacher.

Griffin's philosophy concerning witchcraft is that "anyone can do it." Her personal beliefs are eclectic, incorporating Celtic, Egyptian, Phoenician, and Buddhist views, to name a few. This is a form of the self-taught path that many modern witches follow, enabling them to create a religion that is "tailor-made" to them.

As witchcraft is eclectic by nature, it is easier for a witch to incorporate different views into one belief than it is for other faiths.

"The best advice I can give to someone seeking information on witchcraft is to read everything, read it again, form an opinion, and if you still don't understand, then come and ask me," she said.

Raised on fairy tales, Griffin has studied the occult since she was 8 years old, and has been a practicing witch for eight of her twenty-three years. Her goal is to help others achieve their goals through counseling and lessons in visualization. Although her specialty is reading the tarot cards, Griffin also uses another divination technique—the crystal ball, although she finds it "terribly difficult."

Witches celebrate seasonal changes (Sabbats) as well as the full moons (Esbats). The year begins with Samhain, a celebration of life, death, and life renewed, following the tenet of reincarnation. Also known as Halloween, it is believed by many that ghosts walk the land this night, and witches may use this time to remember friends and family who are deceased.

The Winter Solstice follows, also called



Yule, the shortest day of the year. This celebration began with early man as he recognized the turning point of winter and looked forward to the coming of spring. Traditionally, witches burn a Yule log throughout the night to give the sun (the god figure) strength to burn longer each day and to overcome night.

Imbolc, the festival of the goddess, is also known as the "Feast of Lights," or "Candlemas." It is a fire festival which signifies new beginnings, and is recognized in the Catholic church as the purification of the Virgin Mary after the birth of Christ. The Spring Equinox follows, a celebration of the return of spring.

Beltane, or May Day, is a popular holiday acknowledging the bounty and fertility of nature. It is also a time of creativity for many witches who are artistic, or enjoy working with their hands. The Summer Solstice follows, also known as Midsummer's Eve. Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* focuses on the magic of this night, and it is a time of magical workings for most witches.

Lughnasadh, the beginning of fall, is a time of thinning plants for harvest and preparing for the winter months ahead. The Autumnal Equinox ends the witch's year and is a time of offerings to the gods. Offerings, it must be noted, are not animals or humans. Instead, time, money, food, or clothing, are donated to worthy causes such as Goodwill or the United Way.

"My biggest problem with celebrating the holidays is the commercialism surrounding holidays in today's society," Griffin said.

"I'm trying to revive traditions that have survived so far without [the commercialism] being involved."

For the traditional witch, holidays are quiet, simple observances dedicated to the god and goddess, and are quite often a time of reflection on one's life. With the holiday season approaching, perhaps we should all take time out, light a candle, and reflect.



Sand Visions

Poetry by R. Perrin Ehlinger

Running water hits the rock,
Washing a gold face from the lead
With a splash of charcoal embers.
I am neither living nor dead
But stayed in ashes; dismembered.

The grease filled sky rains black.
Over the fields of dust I pray.
Under the gritted sleet I kneel,
Where to me this dream will lay
A body mask of mud to the heel.

Seven pillars reaching to heaven:
Fluted columns with olive leaf vines.
Rope twined from a rusted steel
Wraps around the pillar's base
To tie seven leaders — each I face
Standing on a stage of marble,
I slip on the blood of the dead.

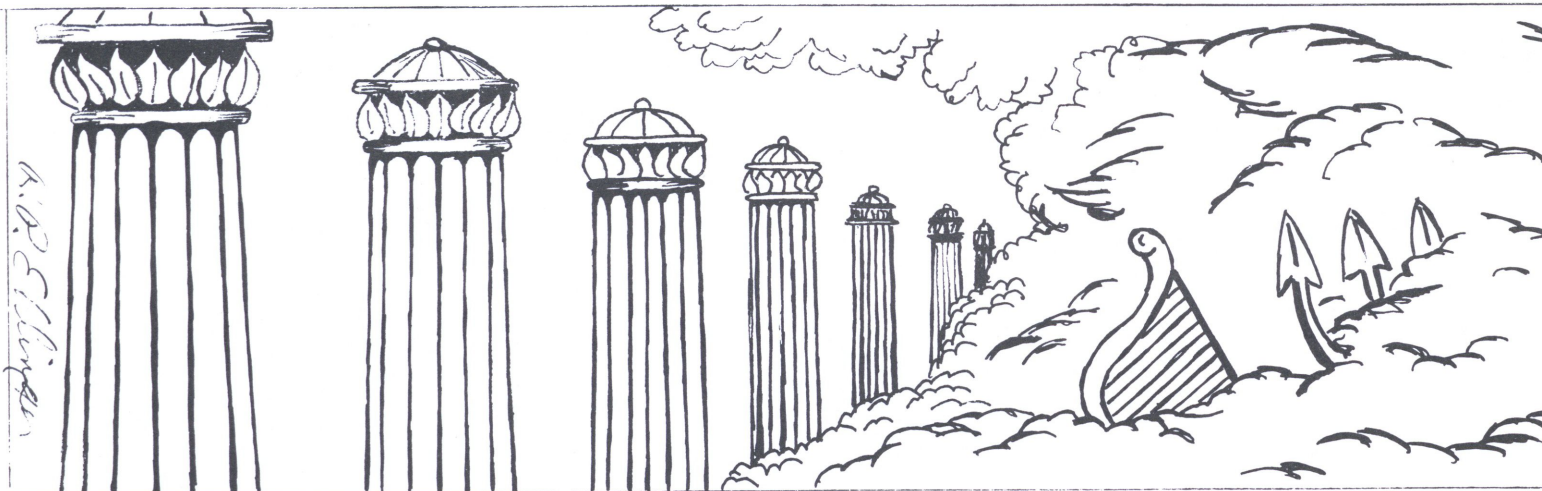
These, the leaders of men,
Trapped by the masses —
An Incalculable Mass.
Where the pope with a plastic staff
Preaches to the crowd with a laugh
At those drowning in spilled blood,
The Red Life of the audience.

Spectators holding their organs,
Mothers eating childrens' brains,
Babies nursing on Dad's cold heart,
And brothers taking pleasure
With their sisters' virgin measure.
Aunts, uncles and all in the crowd;
This scene of unholy terror.

Too late to weave a third circle,
My mind has been drawn into hell —
I no longer control the spell I have cast,
But am a captive to its path;
A corn snake drawn to the husky smell
Of a rodent in the grass;
My choice is to coil and bare fangs.

Splinters from titanium twines
Dig deep into my flesh —
Now it is I cast upon the post,
Bared to the sky, open to the host.
Clothed in the sweat of desperation,
Awaiting the judgement of man.
The Judgement of God.

I find myself raped, surprise -
Torn skin and swollen rectum
From the pleasures of God,



A pleasure for god, the creators.
A tiger roars as I come
Down from the courts of Gabriel
Plucked feathers from the angel

In my hands.

My lawyer, the misrepresented
Appealing to the jury —
My witness, My testimony,
Experience is nothing
When Jesus has cast the first stone.
The sentence being called,
I pass on from nothing
Into a higher order of chaos.

Light breaks and the vision has left me
With little understanding.
Despondency my lover when I sit,
My torture when I stand.
All schemes fall apart at the seams;
All of my half-realized dreams.

Still, I continue to pray,
To what powers will answer?
Flames on the horizon alight
Turning the day into night.
With an offering of salt,
So the second vision assaults.

Raised on a webbing of steel,
This bridge overlooks falling water.
Grey cliffsides with squirrel nests
And screaming vultures to circle.
I'm in the netting, the girdle,
Supposedly a spider awaiting.
My trap is set — lock, nut and bolt.

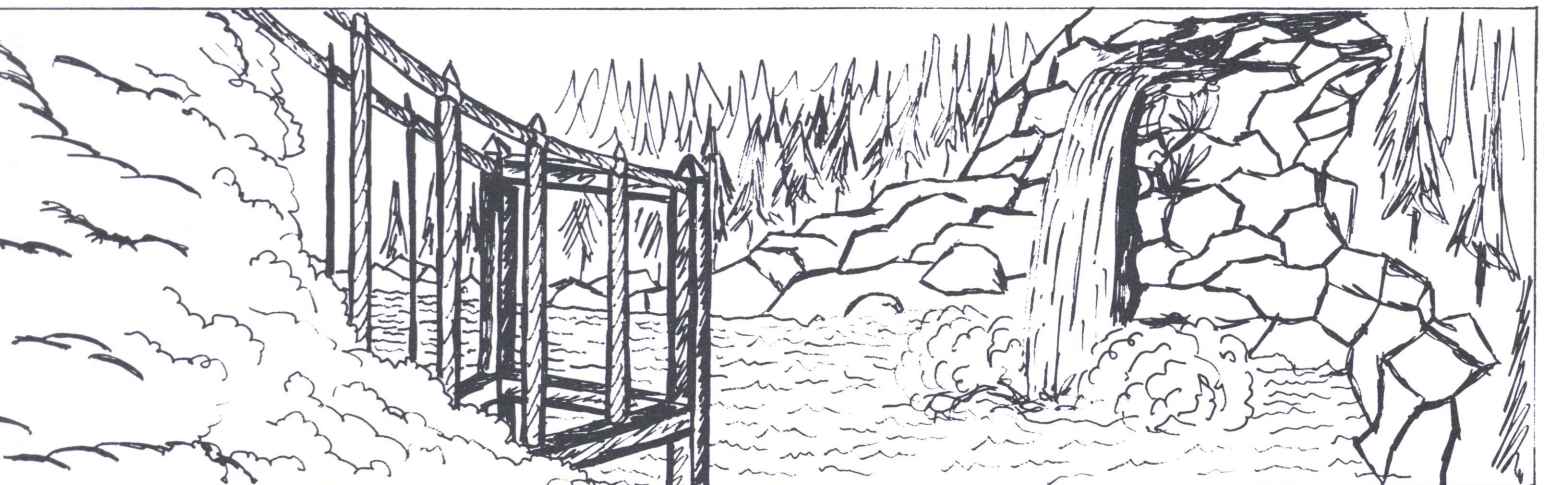
Clear skies, green skies,
A forest's edge on the cliff.
The wait is awesome, awing me
With the beauty of the undisturbed.
The sound of the water falling
Is all that can be heard.
From there, three spirits arrive.

The first, a circle of transparent light
With spokes of ice, the axle unseen.
It spins over the falling water,
Calling my name in whispers.
A muse but I'm caught in steel.
She is colors, beauty and pureness —
A mathematical perfection of sight.

I look to the corners of the bridge,
But they no longer touch the ground.
My vehicle for crossing, turned island.
So I can not reach to the spirit,
Wingless angel, dogma of love.

She expands, mother of milk,
Filling the breadth of the river.
She is the goal which has order —
Design of my sparkling web,
Blueprint, food for construction,
Where the only flaws are my eyes.

Still she calls, as she passes on,
And I am left with longing
For the sweet embrace of her crystal arms.
Spinning away in a whirlwind,
A storm of numbers and charts,
Explanations incomprehensible —



Without her touch.

Second spirit arrives in a cloud,
Hidden by the wispy mists.
In a raspy voice, with sultry words,
It dictates a course for my life:

"This is who you are; live it!
There is nothing you'd rather do.
Your body is clay for the molding,
And your sex is the ultimate truth."
I find myself limp at the calling,
Repelled by the succulent words . . .

"Feel the warm flesh —"
Metal lines enclosing.
"Touch the body there —"
Iron ignites into flames.

A little death draws near to me,
Though fight it as I will,
Until the wind breaks vapors,
And I behold the purple beast:
Loose scrotum, hugging the clouds,
With the face of a cherub boy;
Bearing a harp and a trident,
Carrying all manners of toys.

"Beware!" it laughs, "For I am good yet!"
So it plays monopoly with itself —
Opposing minds in one brain.
Territories struck, conversations a stain.
And next summer the corn snake will mate.

A fog rolls in from the river,
The mists catacombing the falls.
Soothing liquid, frosted and foamed,
Drowning the demon in air.
So disappears the cherub heir,
Where his fates find a home
In the mist's deep tomb.

Rising, taking form from the water,
The third apparition is seen.
A woman in a blanket of moss.
Steel in her eyes, casting my net,
Stone pupils in cold grey eyes.

Her pine-needle eyebrows rustle
While her hair of kelp flows smooth
As if caught in underwater currents.
Uncanny —the body of nature

Faced by a human,
Incompatible forces at peace.

Her mouth remains still,
Lips moistened —a gleam!
Her arms are poised but still.
Her chest rises slowly, lifting her breasts,
To fall with a warm brush of breath
On my face, my face frozen.

I try to survey the changing land
Greenery, greenery and noises
Of life! Of living! Earth take me!
Though every nerve of my arm and leg
Be commanded to spring:
'Uncoil and strike at the earth!'

I remain iced.

I stare as she frowns in a subtle pout
And raises her arms from the fog.
Silent wail, a radio screech,
A scream that tears open her cheeks.
Banshee cry painting over the land,
An omen! Grass banshee be quiet!

The foundation's shaken,
The echo rebounds —
Wires are warped in the wash,
Girders are stretched,
Beams twist like toffee
And me, the spider,
Holding for life with eight hands.

Eruption —a geyser!
She flies with the spout!
Boiling water in her wake —
Boiling rain to blister.
Penance? Punishment?
"I've no sense of obligation!
You leech! Parasite!

Abomination!"

With a cold sweat I'm awake
In the desert with myself,
Laid bare to the shadow of the sun.
Sand lizard, flicker your tongue.
Sand bird, flap a breeze towards me.
I am now a creature of the sand.

College Exotica

Fiction by Sandy Brundage

Cassie's fingers quivered as she turned the doorknob. Sinking into the carpet, she entered the office of Dean Constance and perched on the edge of a shiny oak chair. A stocky, wet-haired boy stood opposite her, grey eyes menacing. He ignored the Dean's invitation to take a seat. As Cassie began to squirm under Dorian's scrutiny, he pivoted to face the Dean.

"I presume that you know why I scheduled this meeting," Dean Constance said.

Dorian tilted his head. "Yes."

"Cassie came to me because she received your suicide note. She said you have been harassing her with continual phone calls, following her, placing black roses in her room and mailbox. Cassie, feel free to correct me if I am wrong. Dorian, do you have any explanation?"

His voice was measured, as if he had rehearsed. "I have been under pressure recently, from all sides. I had to lash out. My brother is fighting with his girlfriend, and I feel that I

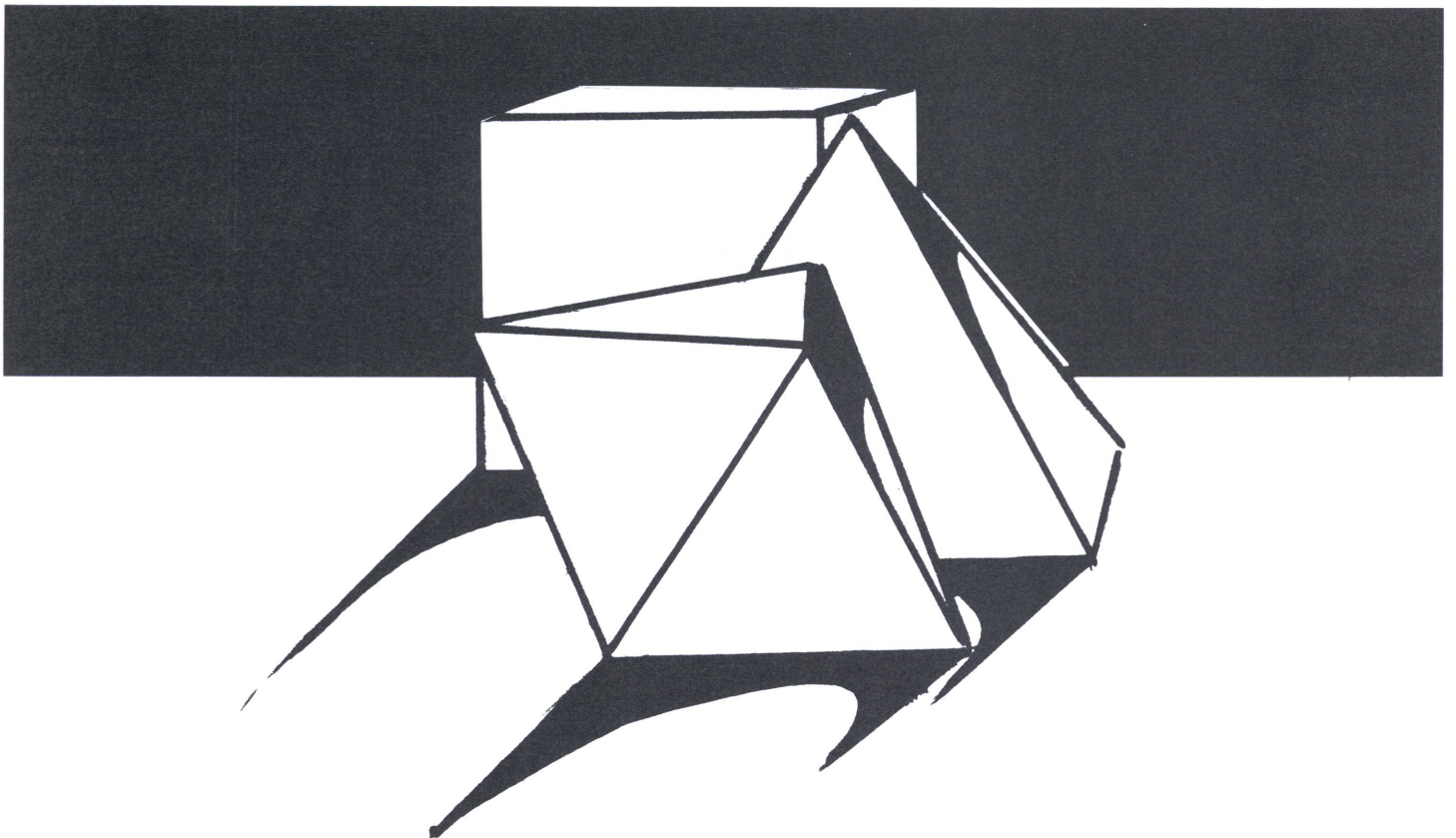
have no home now that . . .

Cassie felt her shoulders get tense enough to start a throbbing ache in her forehead. *Excuses can't stop my pain, or the memories that won't let me sleep. You bastard, I want to hurt you like you hurt me*, she wanted to shout, but instead Cassie clamped her hands together and studied the toes of her black pumps.

Dean Constance leaned nearer to Dorian. ". . . not have any further contact with Cassie. No calls, no notes through friends, nothing. You must realize that you cannot fix this with her. I also strongly advise that you get counseling. Stress must be dealt with in constructive ways. And if this happens again, with anyone, I will take formal disciplinary action. You have lost a friend because of your unacceptable behavior . . ."

Cassie, knowing she was blushing, hoped that her black hair hid her frustration. The narrowed rage of her hazel eyes could not be disguised, however, as she glared at Dorian.

I L L U S T R A T I O N S B Y D A R R E N W I L S O N



A tap on the wrist, why? Everything, reliving last week over and over—useless. I'll still be gripping my pocket knife and hearing footsteps behind me at night. What if he doesn't quit? She jerked out of her thoughts when she realized that the meeting was finished. Cassie thanked Dean Constance, then hastily shook the dead clamminess of Dorian's hand.

Outside, the February wind slid underneath Cassie's untucked sweatshirt, chilling her stomach. The thought of pacing around the pile of laundry in her room made her head towards the lake on the far side of campus. *Why did everything turn crazy? I went to dinner with a friend. I didn't know how he felt; and when I did, I stopped hanging around with him. Did I ask for it, like Mira said I did? I swear I didn't lead him on. God, if only I hadn't agreed to go out with him in the first place.*

Seven people were scattered amongst maps and game scenarios in Jordan's room. Dorian announced from behind his wall of master charts that the party was being raided by a horde of skeletons.

"Cass, we need a spell! My fighter just got slaughtered," Mira cried.

Bring on your rattling bones;
We won't be taken
Without a furious fight.
Taste my fire
And burn

Upon your funeral pyre!"

Cassie's confident voice faded as the chant ended.

"A '2' for poetics, Cass, and the spell fails," Dorian informed the usual crowd of *Dungeons & Dragons* players. He peered at a stack of hexagonal dice, then his head snapped up to fasten eager eyes on the lanky girl sprawled across his bed. "I need to borrow you for a moment in the hallway," he said.

The group grumbled. Dorian required a private talk with her every five minutes.

Outside, Cassie, annoyed by the delays, choked a reply to Dorian's whispered request for her to join him for dinner.

"Dorian, I really have to finish—"

"Homework can wait. Besides, you told Jordan that you wanted to get off campus, and D.D. Dinks is a great restaurant, or so I've heard." The frown on his square face made her uneasily agree. Cassie knew how a brush-off stung, and she had no desire to hurt Dorian.

Dinner was bland. The only odd touch was when Dorian clutched her

arm as her friend Stephen said "hello" to her when they left the restaurant.

I knew Dorian was different. Not too many people hang bullwhips on their walls. But I couldn't snub him because of that—I mean, I've got a ceramic skull sitting on my bookshelf. Was that why I didn't see his obsession? Then the phone calls, every day, the minute I stepped into my dorm, like he'd been watching me. And the suicide note . . . he knew my best friend killed himself last year . . . Enough! It's over. I've done everything I can. At least I've tried to warn people about him. Maybe if I'd been raped they would take this more seriously.

"Hey, Cass! Gosh, it's been ages since I've talked to you. Did you know that Chris and Tammi broke up? Oh, and Jason and I are fighting like crazy over some stupid thing he pulled last weekend. And why did you stop playing D&D? I bet Dorian misses you!" Shelly's shrill words caught Cassie's attention.

"I quit playing to get away from Dorian. He really bothers me. I'd tell him I didn't want to go to a concert with him, and he'd buy two tickets anyway. Stuff like that. Shelly, watch it around him, because he's got major problems."

"Yeah, he's interesting. Anyway, Drama Inc. is going to read the original radio scripts from *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and we want you to do Trillian. It'll be on the radio every Sunday morning. We'll have to rehearse a lot, since the parts are large."

"Trillian? I would love to! Who else is doing it? When would practice start?" A thrill sped up Cassie's back at the idea of performing as her all-time favorite character.

Shelly consulted a scribbled list. "Let's see . . . Jordan is Beeblebrox, I'm the Book, uh-oh. I think maybe we should get someone else for Trillian."

"Why? I'm dying to do *Hitchhiker's*, Shelly!"

"I know, but Dorian has been cast as Arthur Dent. Cass, I just don't want any



trouble between the two of you on the set, OK? If you can handle it, then no problem. I've got to get to calculus. Give me a call later."

"Sure. Catch you whenever." Cassie leaned on the railing of a stone bridge. Tears of helplessness threatened to break the frigid calm she had been clinging to all week. *But I don't know if I can handle it. Damn it, the Dean told him he'd lost one friend. What about me? He's taken five of mine, 'cause I feel like I'm the one that has to duck and run! If I let Dorian stop me, he wins. Dear God, he's still controlling my life and I'm afraid his game's hardly begun.*

She headed back to her dorm. Cassie couldn't help peering beneath her door to check for more roses. Attempts to study for Friday's Spanish exam led to a pile of crumpled notes. Snatching the mossy skull from the bookshelf, she hurled it at a mirror, shattering both.

Two a.m. found her sitting in a mound of twisted sheets. She grabbed the phone.

"Shelly, this is Cass . . . Yeah, I figured you'd be awake. Listen, I still want to do the radio show . . . Yeah, I'm sure, and I promise I'll quit if it gets to be a hassle . . . Great. Thanks a lot . . . OK, I'll see you soon. Bye." But

Cassie heard nothing more about the radio program until a bright flyer arrived in her mailbox in March, announcing the beginning of the *Hitchhiker* series.

A year later, she stood with a date outside her apartment door. He jokingly told Cassie, "Trust me." She replied seriously, "Why should I?"

I don't feel young anymore. I lock my door three times a night, and you won't find me in the phone book. Dorian has a girlfriend now. Me—I'm afraid to go out with anyone, but I'm scared to say no. I'm sorry for turning distant . . . I can't let you know too much.



Painting Memories

Grab a thought and let it go!
Let the image linger...
Beauty, grace and subtleness,
The painting that she brings.
Attracted, yes. So we know
The passion that is brushed,
And all the colors, mixed and swirled
On the canvas that is lushed.

Framed in timeless wood,
Under glass it glows,
Yet every time I look at it,
My fondness for her grows.

She has a picture to match mine,
One I've painted for her.
I hope she hangs it precious,
And fond feelings may it stir.

I keep mine in a sacred room,
One with none other hanging.
Even if she gave no more,
This one I will carefully store
To look upon when I'm alone,
For happiness of remembering her.

And if the chance should ever stand,
I would gratefully paint with her again.

— R. Perrin Ehlinger



"Reconstructed Pane"
Edwin G. Walls
Acrylic and glass on canvas, 24" x 30"

Contributors



Owen Barnes is a senior majoring in public relations from Decatur, Ala. He enjoys backpacking, photography, videography, performing and composing music. In this issue, he used Minolta equipment on Kodak Tri-X 400 film with available sunlight at the Loachapoka Syrup Soppin' Festival.

Shawn Brasfield is a fifth year graphic design major from Birmingham.

Robert Bruce is a senior majoring in sculpture from Enterprise, Ala.

Sandy Brundage is a sophomore double majoring in environmental and civil engineering. Her hobbies include karate, writing, traveling, playing flute, and studying languages. Sandy says she is "from anywhere I happen to be at that moment."

R. Perrin Ehlinger is a major in architecture. He's from New Orleans, he thinks, but isn't sure. He likes to draw, write and read. Dull, perhaps, but he's taking his time with things.

Karin Fecteau is a junior in visual arts. Karin's hobbies are soccer, tennis and running.

Rebecca Haack is Assistant Editor for the *Noise Control Engineering Journal* on campus.

Holly Heath, from North Palm Beach, Fla., is a thesis architecture student. Her photographs were taken only with Canon equipment because Nikons are fickle. She has been doing black and white photography for eight years and is Co-Photography Editor of the *Glomerata* and Assistant Photography Director for the *Circle*.

John Heredia is a senior in art from Montgomery.

Saja Hoffpauir is a senior in social work. Her hometown is Crowley, La.

Todd Keith graduated with a degree in English this summer and has not been heard from since.

Matthew McLean is a junior in mechanical engineering and an escapee from Prattville, Ala. He enjoys being a deejay for WEGL, taking photoids for *The Auburn Plainsman* and co-oping with the E.I. Hatch Nuclear Plant support group.

Cliff Oliver is a junior in economics from Birmingham. His hobbies are photography, backpacking, hiking and canoeing.

Tonya Ponds, a journalism student from Auburn, could not be reached for comment.

Karen Scarborough is a Senior in Graphic Design from LaGrange, GA.

Jeff Snyder is a senior in journalism from Birmingham. He enjoys photography and cooking. For this issue, he used Nikon cameras and lenses, Ilford Delta film, Ilford and Kodak chemistry and Kodak Elite paper.

Tom Starling, a senior in marketing from Atlanta, is Co-Photography Editor for the *Glomerata*. He has been interested in photography for approximately 12 years.

Edwin G. Walls, a junior in journalism, is from Auburn. He likes to look at and sometimes make art.

Darren Wilson is a junior in graphic design from Huntsville, Ala. He loves repelling, skydiving and anything else which could threaten his life.

Shelley Wunder is a freshman majoring in theatre performance. She likes writing, modelling and, of course, theatre.

Jake Adam York is a sophomore in English from Gadsden, Ala. He enjoys reading and writing at all hours of the day. Jake also has been known to play guitar until the bones in his fingers ache.

Epilogue

Now that you've had a chance to read this issue of the *Circle*, you may be asking yourself, "Good Lord, what have they done?" Well, I like to call it getting back to the roots.

The first issue of *The Auburn Circle* came out in 1974. The lead story was an extensive interview with the robust, though at times profane, former Alabama governor Big Jim Folsom. From that time on, the *Circle* came out regularly as a student magazine which included in-depth journalism,

essays, fiction, poetry, art and photography. Somehow, over the last seventeen years, journalism has almost disappeared from the magazine. Then, the magazine almost disappeared from campus (one year, in fact, it did).

As my Grandma used to say, "If no one's eating your turkey, change the dressing." So we did.

This is a year of dramatic change. Become a part of it.

— Chris Smith, Editor

“Are you sure you’re OK to drive?”

“Sure I’m sure! I’ve been a lot worse off than this and made it home just fine”



Photo by Rob Cheek

Cheers.

The Auburn Circle